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# THE CATERER

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**American idol: Why Daniel Patterson is going from fine-dining to flipping burgers in some of America's poorest communities**

theguardian

If the generally twee, tweedy Lake District is changing, then the 34-bedroom Inn on the Square, from the Lake District Hotels group, is hoping to be at the forefront of that. It is all set up for the core walker audience – it's dog-friendly, with a drying room for boots – but it also has a lively second bar, the Queen's Head, and prides itself on its chic, modern design and hip steak restaurant, Brossen.

That pride could be misplaced. The Graves family, who own the group, are part-Danish and the hotel trumpets its Scandinavian design influence. But it looks like the designer had a crisis of faith halfway through. I like the elegant Danish furniture and hand-thrown crockery in the restaurant, and the stark grey wall panelling in my bedroom, but such detail is overlaid with jazzy, borderline bling flourishes. There are plush armchairs in challenging shades, gilt-patterned wallpapers and, in the main lounge bar, multicoloured striped and geometric-patterned sofas so 1980s they look like salvage from the *Swap Shop* studio.

The Graveses are so pleased with the results that you can buy your room to take home (Bodum kettle £59, retro-



**"Multicoloured striped sofas are so 1980s they look like salvage from the Swap Shop studio"**

looking ePure phone £55). The upselling is a theme. The hotel offers a walking guidebook, but you have to pay for it. It is £20 for a late check-out. At breakfast (a fairly impressive spread, overall), the eggs Benedict carries a £2.75 supplement (a fact scribbled on the menu in biro).

Yet the Graves are experienced hoteliers and know what counts in a bedroom: firm mattress, good linens and towels, powerful shower, mist-free mirrors. With its Twinings teas, my room feels generic, but the double glazing effectively shuts out any noise from the car park and I sleep soundly. Which matters. **Price: doubles from £212 B&B**

**The bling details detract from the Scandinavian elegance of the Inn on the Square, Keswick, Cumbria, finds Tony Naylor**

THE TIMES

**Chapel House in Penzance gets Tom Cheshyre's stamp of approval as Cornwall's best new hotel**

Susan Stuart, a former City banker and charity chief executive, bought Chapel House (built in 1790) three years ago. It had previously been the Penzance Arts Club – and, long before, home to Admiral Samuel Hood Linzee of HMS *Temeraire*, the ship made famous by Turner's painting *The Fighting Temeraire*.

The house was in a dilapidated state. Stuart invested in an overhaul, removing rotten floorboards, restoring original cornices and fireplaces, getting rid of pebbledash (to reveal fine red bricks beneath), and

creating a chic hotel, which opened in May.

There are six bedrooms and they have all been kitted out to a high standard, with bathrooms with Rainforest showers, grapefruit, lemon and bergamot Pure Nuff Stuff toiletries, and good-quality towels.

The look throughout is uncomplicated: white-grey floorboards, pale green throw-cushions, aquamarine headboards and soft-grey sofas.

Dinners and breakfasts are served in the flagstone-floored basement, where there's an open-plan kitchen with a wooden-board island bearing bowls of fruit and vegetables. It opens onto a back garden with a terrace with sea views, where canapés and drinks are served. This is Cornwall's best new hotel, though the dining area is a little cramped.

**Rating: 9/10. Price: B&B doubles from £150**

THE INDEPENDENT

**Tracey Macleod reckons Brassica in Beaminster is as pale and interesting as a Hardy heroine**

Brassica is the brainchild of Cass Titcombe, chef and co-founder of the Canteen chain, and his partner Louise Chidgey. The daily-changing menu is modern European rather than Canteen's retro Brit and offers pleasing things wherever you look. There are sharing boards of charcuterie and antipasti; local seafood simply prepared, such as hake with asparagus and Jersey Royals.

A few dishes would fit with Canteen's house style: veal rump steak with roasted carrots, say, or crab salad with radish and brown crab aioli. Most give a sense of the

Canteen cookbook collection having been joyfully plundered: panzanella and caponata, labneh and rillettes. All the signs of a chef slipping out of the constraints of a formula and just cooking what he fancies, using fine local produce.

A starter of braised cuttlefish in a fathomlessly deep brick-red bisque comes over like the love child of a Provençal fish soup and an octopus stew and is blissfully addictive. Mildly cured salt beef – roasted Dexter topside rather than boiled brisket – is paired with clean-cut beetroot and big, shouty radishes. Hogget (mature lamb) is laid in pink slices over herbish, and sour puy lentils spiked with preserved lemon. Whole Dover sole is impeccable.

**Rating: food 4/5; ambience 4/5; service 4/5. Price: around £30 per head for three courses before wine and service**

THE SUNDAY TIMES

**Single-ingredient restaurant Egg Break, in Notting Hill, London, runs the culinary gamut from annoying to infuriating for AA Gill**

The Daily Telegraph

**Lyle's in Shoreditch, London, might be a hit with the hipsters, but it leaves Joseph Connolly unmoved**

The menu features eight starters, but only three mains: no set lunch, and pretty hefty prices. Service is tentative, polite and rather quietly proud.

My pretty mean portion of eel was rather fine, as was a spoonful of broth and a silky onion purée. The radishes were fuchsia-coloured and as briny as you can imagine, quite possibly from having been pickled in Pepto-Bismol.

Then Dexter flank – Dexter being a weeny Irish cow – but it is the word 'flank' that should detain us here: flank is skirt, or bavette. Dexter flank is a cheap

The photocopied menu was disappointing. It starts with short-order breakfast stuff like English egg on toast, Florentine, Benedict, Royale, avocado on toast (this is Notting Hill). But all the eggs are fried or poached. Then there are big sarnies with sweetcorn salsa, red cabbage and cream, or pork belly with mayo and rocket. This is all essentially late-night constructed dude food, or for morning-after munchies, made without style, panache or skill, but with an urgent need to get something big, unctuous and with an undemanding, familiar, primary taste into your mouth.

The bigger plates had eggs with chorizo, tomato and spring onion, which was like a drunk student's brunch; spaghetti carbonara, which was just badly made; and farro, with the 63°C egg.

Now 63°C is the magic temperature when the yolk and white of a fresh egg are supposed to acquire the same creamy texture. In the context of farro, radish, beetroot, feta and sorrel pesto, the texture is irrelevant, because everything else is like a grocer's game of blind man's buff.

But the most telling dish was the scrambled egg. If you're a



restaurant that specialises in eggs, and does nothing else but exalt eggs, then your scrambles should be special, made with a walnut tree of butter, whisked and seasoned with a conductor's flourish. What arrived was tough, stringy, beaten up, tortured – more Guantanamo eggs than scrambled. Blanche looked at them with the misery of an abused child. They'd been cooked far too hot, I expect, on a hotplate, like American breakfast eggs. Baked salted caramel

custard with crème fraîche was barely edible.

If you cook only one thing, and that thing is something everyone who comes into the restaurant also cooks, and you do it worse than pretty much everyone else can do it at home, then what on earth makes you think you're a cook, or that this is a restaurant? Painting a sign doesn't make it one.

**Rating: atmosphere 2/5; food 1/5. Price: £43.87 for two including 12.5% service**

theguardian

**None of the food at Xi'an Impression in London N7 is for the timid but it is worth the trip, says Marina O'Loughlin**

Xi'an Famous Foods is a bona fide success story, with eight outlets around New York. I've tried to find its counterpart over here with little success: either Xi'an in the name is a misnomer, or the food tends towards "mystery meat" gnarliness.

So when I hear whispers about Xi'an Impression – the latest from the Sichuan Folk crew – I'm there like a rat up a drainpipe. The menu in this tiny, functional canteen is gloriously different from yer average Chinese.

We think we've ordered Xinjiang stir-fried chicken for one

(dapanji, or 'big plate chicken' – a relatively modern dish from the neighbouring province), but we get easily enough to feed four. It's lipstick red with chilli, pungent with garlic and Sichuan peppers; red peppers and potatoes bob in there too. The whole thing writhes with biang biang noodles – flat, hand-pulled and hand-torn, and named for the noise they make when slapped against an oiled kitchen surface, blissfully stretchy and chewy.

None of this is food for the timid or people who like their chicken sanitised into a nice breaded goujon. The chicken looks like roadkill – little bones in every bite, the meat and skin to be gnawed off. The 'hamburger's' pork glistens with fat and scraps of skin.

**Rating: food 7/10; atmosphere 3/10; value for money 9/10. Price: about £10-15 a head plus drinks and service**